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ABSTRACT

Most of our public problems--from crime to racial tensions to substance abuse--directly involve and affect young people. The goal of this guide is to create opportunities for young people and adults to talk candidly about youth issues, develop new ideas, and work together to implement these ideas. It fosters democratic dialogue by advocating the use of study circles in which young people themselves play key roles in organizing and leading the groups. The guide lays out basic material for a four- to seven-session discussion program and provides "how-to" information for discussion organizers, leaders, and participants. It provides participants an idea of the wide array of exciting youth work that is being done. The sessions explore such questions as what is it like to be young, how can the community be made a better place for young people, how to deal with racial tensions, violence, health, and substance abuse, and what can be done to make a difference. Materials are also included on study circles, how to organize and lead them, and ground rules for useful discussions. At the end of the guide is a resource list of organizations and publications that can aid further discussion and action. (RJM)

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ED 405 540

Youth Issues, Youth Voices

A Guide for Engaging Youth and Adults in Public Dialogue and Problem-Solving

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You are welcome to photocopy this publication as needed, or you can order additional copies of **Youth Issues, Youth Voices: A Guide for Engaging Youth and Adults in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving** from SCRC for $5.00 each, plus $2.00 per order for shipping and handling; discounts are available for large orders. Also available is **The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Youth Issues, Youth Voices.** The Busy Citizen's booklet, designed as a participant handout for discussion programs based on this guide, consists mainly of the Discussion Materials section of this booklet. Copies of this brief version, in a 5½ x 8½ format, are available for $1.00 each, plus $2.00 per order for shipping and handling; discounts are available for large orders.

Foreword

Why bring young people and adults together for public dialogue?

The purpose of this guide is to create opportunities for young people and adults to talk candidly about youth issues, develop new ideas, and work together to implement them.

Most of our public problems — from crime to racial tensions to substance abuse — directly involve and affect young people. Yet there is little chance in most communities for adults and young people to come together to talk about public issues in a positive and respectful way. The schools that young people attend and the other activities they participate in generally expose them to other young people, with a few adults present in supervisory or leadership roles. The agencies and organizations that work to solve community problems — even "youth problems" — often interact with young people only as clients or recipients.

> *If we want a country in which we value democracy, in which we feel that we can be one spiritual community, where we can begin to shed our ignorance, despair and hopelessness, we must connect with the people who are our future.*
>
> Angela Glover Blackwell
> "Investing in Youth in Urban America"
> *National Civic Review*, Fall-Winter 1994

A growing number of youth professionals and community educators are working to change all that. They recognize that it is essential for young people themselves to have a real voice in addressing youth issues. The discussion process described in this guide is a practical way to accomplish this. Study circles — small-group, democratic, peer-led discussions — provide a simple way to involve community members in genuine, productive dialogue. In this kind of discussion, people have a chance to consider all points of view, discover common ground, and develop the ideas and networks that are necessary for taking effective action. Coming together in this collaborative and democratic way can be an important first step to working together on the wide range of youth issues facing communities around the country.

Several communities have already begun using study circles to involve youth in community problem-solving. Through the study circles, adults and young people are creating the kind of intergenerational relationships that are essential for strong communities. And, as they work together to address common concerns, adults and young people alike are learning the basic skills of active and participatory citizenship.

Any community organization or coalition of organizations can sponsor study circles on youth issues. Schools, government agencies, faith communities, student groups, neighborhood associations, youth programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Urban Leagues, YWCAs, YMCAs, sports organizations, social service agencies — *all* can provide opportunities for young people and adults to talk about the community issues that impact them. Study circles on youth issues will be most effective if many of the participants are young people, if the young people themselves play key roles in organizing and leading the groups, and if the study circles are connected with organizations already working to address youth problems.

Youth Issues, Youth Voices is a flexible tool for creating open, democratic dialogue. It lays out basic material for a four- to seven-session discussion program, and provides "how-to" information for discussion organizers, leaders, and participants. "Youth programs that work" (see page 31) will help give participants an idea of the wide array of exciting youth work that is being done. At the end of the guide is a resource list of organizations and publications that can aid further discussion and action.

Adapt and tailor this guide to the needs of your community or organization. And let us hear from you! At the Study Circles Resource Center, we can assist you with your program and put you in touch with others who are organizing similar programs. We also want to learn from you so that we can more fully document the creative ways that you are bringing together youth and adults for public dialogue.

Introduction

A challenging and exciting time for young people

The years between childhood and adulthood are full of new experiences and new challenges. Relationships with parents change, friends and friendships become more important, school is more challenging, responsibilities increase, and life gets more complex. It's also in these years that young people can begin to take an active role in their communities.

The challenges facing today's young people are different from those their parents faced. People who live in the same neighborhood, sometimes even on the same block, don't know each other like they used to. Families are under more stress, often with a single parent, or with two working parents. Many institutions that used to support families and youth aren't as strong as they used to be. And young people hear conflicting messages about relationships, behavior, and values.

More than ever, roles and expectations for young people are unclear. Who has authority over what? How much independence should a young person have? How much responsibility? What rights or privileges? What obligations? In an increasingly complex world, young people need to know where to turn.

Here are some problems and trends affecting teens in the U.S. today:

- ***Changing family patterns.*** Nationally, the number of families headed by a single parent has increased from 22 percent in 1985 to 26 percent in 1993, a situation which often increases economic and other hardships (*1996 Kids Count Data Book*).
- ***Poverty.*** In 1974, 10.2 million American children lived below the poverty level. In 1994, that number had risen to well over 15 million (*1996 Kids Count Data Book*). This includes 5.6 million children whose parents cannot earn enough, even if they are working full time, to escape poverty.
- ***Violence.*** There has been a dramatic increase in the number of young people who are victims or perpetrators of violent crime. Also, youth are involved in crime at younger and younger ages. Violence is now the second-most frequent cause of death for youth (after motor vehicle accidents), with firearms involved in one of every four deaths among people ages 15-19 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1996). Violent death among teens increased by 10% from 1985 to 1993, including a homicide rate which doubled (*1996 Kids Count Data Book*). "Youth violence," said Attorney General Janet Reno, "is the greatest single crime problem in America today."
- ***Conflict between racial and ethnic groups.*** In many communities and high schools, there is growing tension among youth of different racial and ethnic groups. This is a reflection of what is taking place in the whole society. Segregation, tensions, and misperceptions between whites and people of color are growing. There are also growing tensions *among* ethnic minority groups (The National Conference Survey on Inter-Group Relations, 1995).
- ***Dating violence and date rape.*** One out of three teenage girls in a dating relationship in high school is physically or sexually abused (*Helping Teens Stop Violence*, 1990).
- ***Substance abuse.*** After a decline in drug use in the 1980s, teenage use of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol is on the rise again. Marijuana use by young people aged 12-17 is up from 6 percent in 1994 to 8.2 percent in 1995. Marijuana users are more likely to use other drugs, and less likely to achieve academically. There were 10 million alcohol drinkers under age 21 in 1995. Of these, 4.4 million were binge drinkers (1996 Household Survey on Drug Abuse).
- ***Lack of economic opportunity.*** It's harder to find good jobs that pay a living wage. In the late 1960s, a full-time job that paid minimum wage could keep a family of three out of poverty. In 1994, the same working adult earned only 70 percent of the income

needed to lift a family of three out of poverty (*1996 Kids Count Data Book*). These economic realities are even worse for those who have only a high school education.

- ***Teen pregnancy.*** Rates of teen pregnancy have tripled in the last 30 years. Also, ***sexually-transmitted diseases***, particularly AIDS, are much higher for the 15- to 25-year-old age group than a decade ago (Centers for Disease Control, Information Hotline, 1996).

Despite these challenges, there is strong reason for hope. There are more chances than ever for young people to take charge of their lives, to be leaders, to get involved in public life, and to help solve the problems that affect them. In many communities, programs have been developed to tap the leadership potential of young people and empower them to help bring about positive change.

To deal with today's issues, our communities need the involvement, energy, creativity, talent, and caring of *every* citizen, and that includes young people.

Session 1

What is it like to be young? Sharing personal experiences and perceptions

The purpose of this session is for you to share your thoughts about being young, and to learn what your community is like for young people. By getting to know each other, you will begin to build the trust you need to look at some of the tough issues in the rest of our discussions.

Activity #1

Pair up with someone you don't know very well, and interview your partner for three minutes. Find out three things about your partner that you can't tell just from appearance. Then switch. When the whole group comes back together, the partners will introduce one another to the group.

Activity #2

The leader will help the group set its own ground rules for discussion. Refer the group to "Ground rules for useful discussions" on page 28 of this publication or at the end of the Busy Citizen's Guide. See also "A comparison of dialogue and debate" on page 29 of this publication.

Discussion questions

1. What's good about being young? What's difficult about it? [If you are an adult, what are your strongest memories about being young? How did your experiences growing up shape what you want for young people today?]
2. What is our community like for young people? [Here, "community" could refer to the school, the neighborhood, or even the entire city.]
3. In this community, how do kids and adults get along? Have you been able to get to know someone from another generation who isn't a family member?
4. What is your background? [When you answer this, think about your racial or ethnic group, your religion or other ways you describe yourself.] How does your background affect how you see yourself and how other young people and adults see you? How do you make up your mind about other people?
5. Do kids in this community belong to different groups? How do you feel about this? How does it affect your life? Do you know how the adults in your life feel about the groups you belong to? [If you are an adult, tell us how belonging or not belonging to different groups affected your life when you were young.]
6. What rights should a young person have? What responsibilities? How should that be decided? How do those rights and responsibilities change with age?

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Ice Breaker Exercise

Think about what it is like (or was like, or will be like) being 16 years old — the setting, the times, the feelings. Take a few minutes to answer these questions about yourself at age 16.

Break into small groups of 2 to 4 people and share your answers. Then, with the whole group, move on to the discussion questions.

1. The year is _____.
2. I live in _____ (city/town) _____ (state), population _____ (approximate).
3. I go to _____.
4. I'm good at _____.
5. Signs of the times (social/political) include _____.
6. After school/work, I hang out at _____.
7. My friends and I eat and drink _____.
8. Today, I'm wearing _____.
9. For fun, I _____.
10. The music I listen to is telling me to _____.
11. I'm worried about what will happen to me if _____.
12. My parents most often give me advice about _____.
13. I'm getting lots of pressure to _____.
14. One thing I really don't understand is _____.
15. One thing I feel proud about is _____.
16. My plans for the future include _____.

Adapted from Sixteen Candles, *an exercise developed by*
Mary Doyen of the Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education in Lakewood, CO
and Phyllis Scattergood of the Education Development Center in Newton, MA.

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Session 2

How can we make our community a better place for young people?

The purpose of this session is to look at our "community" (however we are defining that for our discussions — our school, neighborhood, or whole city) from the point of view of young people. We'll have the chance to think about what we'd like to improve, and how we could go about making our community a better place for young people.

Activity #1

Begin by having each person write down answers to the following questions: "When you think of your community, what are you having trouble with? What are you worried about? What do you feel good about?"

After a few minutes, ask members to share with the group, and record the information. This will help the group build a picture of the community as it is now.

Discussion questions

1. What do you think are the main issues, problems, and challenges that kids in our community are facing? Why do you think these problems exist here?
2. Are there people in the community who aren't in this discussion who would identify other problems or concerns?
3. Do you think our community is different from other communities in our area? In the nation?
4. What is going well in the community? What activities in the community are making a positive difference in your life? What else could we do?
5. What are kids contributing to our community now? What else might they do?
6. Do you know about things being done in other communities that might be useful for us?

Activity #2

Do a group brainstorming exercise where members respond to the following: "It is the year 2005. This community (school, neighborhood, city) is a wonderful place for young people to be and grow up. What does it look like? How do things work?"

Record the group's vision for the future.

Discussion questions

1. In what ways is our future picture of the community different from today?
2. What would need to happen to make the changes?
3. What roles could young people play in changing the community?

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Session 3 — Looking at specific community issues

On the following pages you will find suggestions for discussion sessions on four different issues. On any one issue, you may need to meet more than once to complete your discussion.

Session 3a — How can we deal with racial and ethnic tensions? 8

Session 3b — How can we reduce violence and make the community a safer place? 10

Session 3c — How can we promote healthy and responsible dating relationships? 12

Session 3d — How can we deal with substance abuse? 14

If your group wants to talk about an issue that isn't covered in this guide, use Sessions 3a-3d as models for developing your own material. Find articles from a local newspaper, make an outline, or develop a list of questions to guide the discussion. As part of the study circle, encourage group members to bring in materials on the issue. Try to make sure the material covers a broad range of viewpoints.

See "Resources for further discussion and action," on page 33 for additional discussion materials, and for assistance on developing discussion material. Note especially SCRC's *Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Material*, listed with SCRC resources.

Session 3a

How can we deal with racial and ethnic tensions?

What some kids are saying

- ✓ *"Our school has kids from lots of different cultures, but we don't mix much except in classes. How come at lunch and after school the majority of us hang out with our own group?"*
- ✓ *"Racial problems come from a lack of respect. I mean, an African American does not respect a Latino in his own community, a Latino does not respect an Asian, an Asian does not respect an African American."*
- ✓ *"The only way that we're going to come together is if we all learn about each other's past. Because if you don't know about me, and I don't know about you, there's still going to be some kind of prejudice in our minds."*

Tension among different racial and ethnic groups is a real problem in communities across the country. It affects whether we can get along, in school or out in the community. It can affect our daily lives in many ways — from whether we respect each other, to how we treat each other, to how we deal with conflict. When racial tensions go unresolved, they often lead to violence.

Sometimes racial tension gets further complicated by other differences: we form groups that include some people (and exclude others) because of the way we dress, the way we live, or where we come from.

The purpose of this session is to help us talk about racial and ethnic tensions and what we can do about them.

Five viewpoints

How can we reduce tension and improve relationships between racial and ethnic groups? Here are five ways to address this problem.

Viewpoint #1 — We need to confront racism head-on. We need to examine our personal attitudes, change them, and move beyond them. Every young person should

Why do we have racial tension?
Some different ideas

- **Racism is everywhere in America.** Racism — the belief that some people are better than others because of skin color, and the power structures that are built on that belief — is a fact of life in our country. Young people are reflecting and becoming a part of the culture they're growing up in.
- **Racial tension is getting worse because some minorities portray white people as the "enemy."** That kind of attitude inflames racial conflicts.
- **Racial tension comes from misunderstanding and fear about people who are different.** Since people of different racial groups don't have many chances to get to know each other, it is easy to believe common stereotypes.
- **Racial tension gets worse because some people are defensive and overly sensitive.** People in racial minorities can get into a "victim mindset" and see every problem as related to race.
- **Racial tension is increasing because it's harder to get ahead.** It's tough for anyone to "make it" in our system, but it's tougher still for people of color. Tensions and frustrations between groups are a natural consequence of this competition.

Of these reasons, is there one or more that you agree with? Why? Is anything left out?

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take part in anti-racism and prejudice reduction programs. To confront societal racism, sometimes we need to give extra privileges to members of groups that have been the victims of racism.

Viewpoint #2 — We should work together on common projects. When kids of different racial groups work together on community projects, they make friends and racial tensions begin to disappear. Church groups, school clubs, team sports, and community service projects can offer the chance to have one-on-one relationships with people of different races.

Viewpoint #3 — We should treat everyone the same regardless of their race. In our attitudes, we should always look at the content of someone's character, not the color of the person's skin. In our policies, we shouldn't give certain groups special privileges. To be fair, the rules should be the same for everybody. When some groups have special privileges, it creates resentment and even more problems.

Viewpoint #4 — People of *all* ages and races need to work together on racial problems. The education of young people is important, but it will never be enough. Adults have to be a part of the discussion of racism and racial tensions, and have to be willing to make changes, too.

Viewpoint #5 — We need more chances to learn about each other. Stereotypes break down when young people become knowledgeable about different cultures and traditions. Community, church, or school events which celebrate different cultures can promote trust, understanding, and friendship.

Discussion questions

1. You might take turns reading the viewpoints aloud. Which view sounds right to you? Why? Is anything left out?
2. How has your experience affected your feelings about this issue?
3. How do you think the adults in your life would feel about these viewpoints?

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion and action

There are many ways we can help address racial problems.

As individuals, we can examine our own attitudes, and pay attention to how we talk about others who are different. We can challenge other people about their prejudiced remarks. We can treat people as individuals, not stereotypes. We can reach out to people who are different and try to make friends. We can make an effort to learn about other cultures.

With small groups of people who care about reducing racial tension, we can get involved in projects, clubs, teams, and organizations where we will meet people from other backgrounds. We can join efforts that work on building bridges between different groups.

As a community, we can sponsor projects that welcome all young people in the community. We can organize a monthly dance, or multi-ethnic programs at a youth center or recreation center. We can be part of community service projects that bring different racial groups together and benefit the entire neighborhood. We can sponsor study circles on race relations all over the community.

4. What is being done in your school or community to address problems between groups? What has worked? What's not working well? Why?
5. What are other communities doing? Is another community doing something that we might learn from?
6. What could we do to reduce conflict between groups? How can kids take the lead? Who else should be involved?
7. What are our next steps?

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Session 3b

How can we reduce violence and make the community a safer place?

What some kids are saying

- ✓ *"In school I've seen violence by teenagers—beatings, people being jumped. I think these things happen because we don't trust each other and we don't know one another."*
- ✓ *"A lot of people turn violent to protect themselves. They'll get into a gang so they won't get messed up by another gang. And it's just a cycle which keeps on getting worse and worse."*
- ✓ *"How come we teenagers can get guns faster than we can get a job?"*

For many kids, fear and violence are daily companions. Teenagers may face violence in their homes, in their schools, or on the streets. Many schools are no longer the safe havens they used to be. Some kids even carry weapons to school because they are afraid of being hassled or beaten up.

Today, many communities are working to "take back the streets." Citizen action, community policing, and neighborhood groups working together have made a big difference in this problem. Young people are critical to the success of these efforts.

The purpose of this session is to talk about violence involving kids, and to find ways to work together to make this a safer place for all of us.

Six viewpoints

Here are six possible ways to address the problem.

Viewpoint #1 — We need to punish troublemakers. We need to get tougher on the small number of young people who are committing most of the violent acts in our community. Kids who don't straighten out should be locked up. We also need better protection against violence. There must be more security in schools, and harsher punishments for those who break the rules. We need more police in high-crime areas. We need laws allowing police to stop and frisk young people who look suspicious.

Viewpoint #2 — We should make it harder to get guns. Young people are no different today than they were 20 or 40 years ago. Teenagers have always hung out in groups, and gangs have been around for a long time. What's different is that instead of using fists or knives, kids now can get access to handguns and even automatic weapons. We need to pass and enforce strict gun control laws, and we should educate everyone about the dangers of guns.

Viewpoint #3 — We need to deal with drugs and alcohol. Many violent crimes are committed by people who are drunk or on drugs. We need to prevent substance abuse, enforce bans on sales of alcohol to minors, and

What are the causes of violence in our community? Some ideas

- Violence happens because families are under stress and breaking down.
- Violence is growing because our culture — movies, music, TV — glorifies it and shows it as a way to solve problems.
- Violence is on the rise because we are too soft on troublemakers.
- Violence grows in the poor parts of cities where crime and drugs are common.
- Violence is getting worse because it's easier for kids to get guns.

Of these reasons, is there one or more that you agree with? Why? Is anything left out?

provide more "chem-free" activities for youth. Also, we need to crack down on the people who deal drugs, since the drug trade is usually tied to violence and crime.

Viewpoint #4 — We need to learn how to resolve problems peacefully. Violence is everywhere, so it can seem natural to use violence in a conflict unless we learn how to stop problems before they become fights. Kids and adults must have the chance to learn communication skills, conflict resolution techniques, and peer mediation. We need violence prevention education in all our schools and communities.

Viewpoint #5 — We need to protect ourselves. Things are out of control, especially in many large cities, and kids can't always count on adults for protection. Every young person should take self-defense programs such as martial arts. Young people should carry a pocket-size alarm, or a defensive "pepper" spray.

Viewpoint #6 — We need to deal with poverty. All the things that happen more frequently in high-poverty areas — family disruption, high drug and alcohol use, overburdened schools, joblessness — make these areas a "powder keg" for violence. We need to do more than rescue individual children who live in these areas; we have to change their environments.

Discussion questions

1. Take turns reading the viewpoints. Of the six views, is there one, or a combination, that you agree with? Why? Is there a point of view left out?
2. How has your experience affected your feelings about this issue?
3. Why do you think violence happens in this community?
4. What could we do in our community to make it safer? Is anything already being done? What's working? Why or why not?
5. Is another community doing something that we might learn from?
6. How can young people take leadership around this issue?
7. What are our next steps?

What can we do? Ideas for further discussion and action

As individuals, we can practice good communication and conflict resolution skills, so that arguments don't escalate into violence. We can get help with substance abuse, or work in a prevention program. We can join a neighborhood watch. We can learn mediation skills to use at school or work.

As small groups of concerned citizens, we can address community violence by organizing programs that bring different people together on common projects. We can volunteer to take part in (or help to start) community policing efforts. We can raise money to sponsor athletic activities for teenagers and young adults. We can ask local media outlets to review their programming for violent messages.

As a community, we can address violence by sponsoring public education campaigns on violence. We can ask our schools to incorporate curricula to prevent or reduce violence. We can sponsor summer internships and youth programs. We can organize intergenerational community service projects. We can organize study circles on violence all over the community.

Session 3c

How can we promote healthy and responsible dating relationships?

What some kids are saying

- ✓ *"Even though we've had sex education in health classes, my boyfriend and I don't always use a condom."*
- ✓ *"I want to be good friends with a guy and have that be O.K."*
- ✓ *"No way I can ask my new girlfriend if she's been tested for AIDS, even though I know she's dated a lot of guys."*
- ✓ *"Last night my boyfriend told me I was too fat, and then pushed me around."*

Friendships and relationships become more and more important in the years between childhood and adulthood. Our social life has a strong impact on how we feel about ourselves and the people around us, and can affect us for the rest of our lives.

What we usually don't think of is the way our friendships and relationships affect the whole community. But, more and more, "relationship problems" are becoming "community problems," such as dating violence, teen pregnancy, and AIDS.

In this session we will talk about how we can have healthy social lives, friendships, and dating relationships, and how our relationships affect community life.

Five viewpoints

Here are some approaches to developing good social and dating relationships.

Viewpoint #1 — Good social relationships begin with strong families. The family is the basic unit of society. It is the best place for kids to learn about loving and respectful relationships. If we support and strengthen families, we will have young people who can relate to others in healthy ways.

Dating relationships among young people are more and more in the public eye. Why?

- Unmarried teens are having children. A large number of these young mothers spend years on welfare, and fathers are often absent.
- Because of AIDS, having unprotected sex can be a life-and-death situation.
- Unhealthy relationships among young people can set up long-term patterns of abuse, poor self-image, eating disorders, and self-destructive behaviors that can carry into adulthood and marriage.
- Add alcohol or other drugs to a social or dating situation and the chance of making bad choices gets higher.

Is there an issue here, or combination of issues, that you feel are problems for the young people in our community?

Viewpoint #2 — We should focus on facts, openness, and respect. The best way to promote good social and dating relationships is to offer complete education about sexuality, gender roles, and respectful behavior from early childhood on. Every student should be required to take a course on human sexuality that teaches communication skills and the value of mutual respect. The course should also include facts about sexually-transmitted diseases.

Viewpoint #3 — Good friendships and dating relationships start with good values. When young people belong to organizations that teach strong values — such as churches, synagogues, youth organizations, or summer

Facts and trends

- **Unmarried teens who have children** are less likely to enter the labor force; their children are more likely to live in poverty. Children born to teenage mothers are more likely to drop out of school, give birth out of wedlock, divorce or separate, or live on welfare (*1996 Kids Count Data Book*).
- **What contributes to teens having babies?** Here are four common factors: 1) poverty; 2) not doing well in school and having low hopes for achievement; 3) troubled family life; and 4) substance abuse and behavioral problems (*1996 Kids Count Data Book*).
- **HIV infection** is growing faster than ever before among young people between the ages of 15 and 25. Worse yet, it may be 4 to 8 years before sexually active young people discover they are infected (Centers for Disease Control, AIDS Hotline, 1996).

camps — they are better able to make good decisions about friends, social life, and dating.

Viewpoint #4 — Good friendships and dating relationships need support from a strong community. Schools, social service agencies, churches, and other community organizations can work together to create an environment that promotes and supports healthy relationships. They can create welcoming places for young people. They can also sponsor activities where young people can meet others in the community.

Viewpoint #5 — We should make sure kids have adult supervision and guidance. Parents should be involved in their kids' lives, and know where their kids are and who they're with. Young people need to know that there are adults — their parents or others they can trust — whom they can talk to and confide in.

Discussion questions

1. Take turns reading the viewpoints. Which of the five points of view makes the most sense to you? Why? Are there other viewpoints left out?
2. How has your experience affected your thinking?
3. What is a "good" friend, or a "good" dating relationship? If you were answering this question for a younger brother or sister, what would you say?
4. Do you think the young people in our community have good social and dating experiences? How could they be better?
5. How do these relationships affect the community as a whole? Are we addressing the problems that are making dating relationships a more public concern?
6. What could we do in our own community to improve the social lives of kids? Is anything already being done? What has been successful? Why or why not?
7. Is another community doing something that we might learn from?
8. How can kids take leadership around this issue?
9. What are our next steps?

What can we do?
Ideas for further discussion and action

As individuals, we can practice appropriate, respectful behaviors towards others of both genders. We can decide not to be part of activities that are unhealthy or unsafe. We can treat others in ways that build self-esteem.

As small groups of people, we can work with organizations to provide education and support programs for families and young people. We can help start a teen center, or volunteer at a youth center that is already in the community. We can organize community activities that are youth-oriented and chem-free.

As a community, we can show that young people are a priority by dedicating time and space to after-school activities for kids. Businesses, churches, synagogues, mosques, schools, libraries, YWCAs, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other organizations can provide social opportunities that are safe and fun.

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Session 3d

How can we deal with substance abuse?

What some kids are saying

- ✓ *"When I'm with my friends, I always end up drinking too much."*
- ✓ *"It's hard being the designated driver when everybody else is wasted."*
- ✓ *"Marijuana is a natural substance. Nobody ever died from it, even when they smoke everyday!"*
- ✓ *"I don't use drugs or alcohol, and because of that I sometimes have a hard time fitting in."*
- ✓ *"I drink, but I'm not going to do it like my dad does."*

After several years of decline, the use of drugs — alcohol, tobacco, and illegal substances — among kids is once again on the rise. Beer and marijuana are used by many high school students, and even some middle schoolers. There is binge drinking on college campuses and at high school parties. Drug-related incidents, including overdosing among teenagers, are commonplace in many communities.

The use of alcohol and other drugs often plays a key role in violent crime, rape, suicide, car accidents, unsafe sex, and family-related violence. With ten million alcohol drinkers under the age of 21, including 4.4 million binge drinkers, substance abuse is recognized as a serious problem affecting our young people and our communities.

In this session, we'll talk about substance abuse, how it affects our community, and what to do about it.

Five viewpoints

Many individuals, organizations and communities are working to address substance abuse problems. Here are several approaches.

Viewpoint #1 — We should make sure kids and families who need substance abuse treatment have an opportunity to get it. Intervention and treatment programs, substance abuse counselors, and support groups

Why is there a substance abuse problem among young people?
Some ideas

- **Young people are naturally curious, and don't realize that occasional use can turn into abuse.** Kids are inexperienced with alcohol and other drugs, and can easily get in over their heads.
- **Young people abuse substances because "everyone does it, and it feels good."** Young people use alcohol and other drugs to fit in with their friends and be part of the group.
- **Young people abuse drugs when they are bored, lonely, or depressed.** The transition to adulthood can be confusing and emotional. Substances provide an escape.
- **Young people who abuse substances are imitating the adults around them.** It is unrealistic to think that kids won't abuse alcohol and other drugs when their parents and other adults do.
- **Young people abuse drugs to get attention.** Abusing substances is a sure way to get parents' attention.
- **Young people abuse drugs because adults fail to control their kids.** Society used to be stricter about drug and alcohol abuse, but now a lot of adults have given up.

Rank these according to what you think are the most common reasons. Which views are closest to your own? Are any reasons left out?

should be readily available to everyone who needs them. People who work with kids should be aware of the issue, and help them get the treatment they need.

Viewpoint #2 — We need early education and prevention programs. The only way to get a handle on this is to teach young people about the dangers of substance abuse. Kids need to know the hard facts about drugs and alcohol, and how they affect their bodies and their health. In the face of media that glorify drug and alcohol use, kids need to learn to say no and to understand why.

Viewpoint #3 — We need plenty of chemical-free activities so that kids can have fun without using. When young people are busy with their friends in fun activities, they experience the "natural highs" that come with health, physical activity, and personal achievement, and are less attracted to alcohol and other drugs.

Viewpoint #4 — We need to crack down on substance abuse. We can make a difference in kids' lives by sending a strong and consistent message through our school policies and legal system: underage, illegal use of substances will not be tolerated. Schools, parents, young people, police, and the whole community need to act together on this. Kids who break the rules should be suspended from school, and punished.

Viewpoint #5 — We should make sure that kids have adult supervision and guidance. Parents should know where their kids are and who they're with. They should also be aware of the warning signs of substance abuse. Young people need to know that there are adults — their parents, or others they can trust — whom they can talk to and confide in. They also need to know that a lot is expected of them, and that *they* are the only ones who can meet those expectations.

What can we do?
Ideas for further discussion and action

As individuals, we can get smart about alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs so that we know what they do to the body. We can be part of preventive programs in schools, churches, and youth organizations. We can write letters to school and police officials to offer support and suggestions for policies.

As small groups of concerned citizens, we can organize parent-student groups to learn about substances and come up with ideas to address the problem. We can volunteer to help with chem-free activities for families and young people. We can take part in workshops and programs that show the damage to health that drugs can cause. We can help create programs where young people can work as peer counselors with others who have a problem with substance abuse.

As a community, we can pass laws to punish underage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. We can support law enforcement efforts to eliminate drug traffic from the community. We can lobby businesses to hold drug and alcohol prevention programs for their employees. We can monitor small businesses to make sure they are not selling tobacco or alcohol to minors, and support them when they say no.

Discussion questions

1. Take turns reading the views aloud. Which approach do you think is best? Why? Is anything important left out of these approaches?
2. Why do you think some young people in our community abuse substances?
3. What could we do in our own community to reduce substance abuse? Is anything already being done? Is it working? Why or why not?
4. Is another community doing something that we can learn from?
5. How can young people take leadership around this issue?
6. What are our next steps?

Session 4

Making a difference: What can we do now?

The purpose of this session is to talk about the next steps we can take to make a difference on youth issues in our community. Some of those steps can be taken individually, and others can be taken as part of this group or other community groups.

Ideas for individual action

- Make a habit of raising the issues you care about in conversations with the adults and young people in your life. Ask them what they think, and find out what is already being done in the community.
- Get involved in an ongoing group or program where you can meet others and talk about the issues facing youth in the community. Some examples of these programs:
  - ✓ a youth program or teen center
  - ✓ a church or synagogue youth group
  - ✓ a club or group at school
  - ✓ a teen support group or discussion group
- Be a leader in a youth program. For example:
  - ✓ get trained as a peer mediator or peer leader
  - ✓ run for student council
  - ✓ work on the student newspaper
  - ✓ take a leadership role in planning programs at a youth program or teen center
- Join a community organization. For example:
  - ✓ get involved in your local neighborhood group
  - ✓ help out in a political campaign
  - ✓ volunteer for community service at an organization that is dealing with the issues that concern you most
  - ✓ do an internship for an organization that provides services or does advocacy
- Be a leader in a community organization. For example:
  - ✓ join a committee at your church or synagogue
  - ✓ participate in an organization that serves youth
  - ✓ offer to serve on the board of directors of a community organization
  - ✓ help plan youth programs in your city, or sit on the youth services commission

What you can do as part of a community organization

(For more detailed information on these ideas, see "Youth programs that work" on page 31 and "Resources for further discussion and action" on page 33.)

- Help organize study circles on youth issues.
- Facilitate a study circle in a program you've helped organize.
- Sponsor a youth support group.
- Help develop school programs such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, or peer leadership.
- Help organize a basketball or soccer tournament that will bring together young people from many neighborhoods.
- Help develop a mentoring program in which adults and older youth can work with younger people and children.
- Help start a youth center. If there is already a youth center in your community, help develop new programs or groups there, or support existing programs.
- Help organize a youth summit for your community.

Possible next steps for this study circle

- Continue to meet as a study circle to learn more about what's going on in the community, or to focus on specific issues.
- Put into action some of the ideas you talked about in other sessions.
- Meet with other study circles to exchange action ideas that have come out of the groups.

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- Pair up with another study circle and continue talking. Consider pairing with a group from a different neighborhood, faith, or ethnic background.

Discussion questions

1. Now that the study circle is over, what next steps do you want to take? What motivates you the most to take these steps? What is your greatest obstacle to taking action? What would you need to overcome that?
2. Think back to some of the visions, challenges, and issues you have discussed in the previous sessions. In light of those, what does the community need to do? What role could you play? Would any of the suggestions for action here help with those challenges and problems?
3. Do any of the programs mentioned here exist in our community? What has been successful? Do we need to find out more about what programs exist, or about what they do?
4. What roles could kids play in our community to make a positive difference? How could kids and adults work together better?
5. What resources are in the community to help set up programs to engage youth more in public life and to develop leadership skills? Do you know how to get in touch with them?
6. How can people and organizations work together better on youth issues?
7. For you, what was the most important idea that came out of this group?

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What is a study circle?

A dozen people are comfortably seated around a table, several others looking as though they would like to make a point, one skimming an article as if searching for a particular item, another scanning the group, and the others listening attentively. This is a study circle in action.

A study circle is 5 to 15 people who agree to meet together several times to address a social or political issue in a democratic and collaborative way. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth. Reading material serves to stimulate the discussion and provides a common reference point. While consensus is not necessary, participants generally find common ground and often develop action steps for change.

Philosophy and background

As an informal, practical, and effective way to promote community building and problem solving, the study circle is rooted in the civic movements of nineteenth century America. Today, the use of study circles and similar small-group discussion programs is growing rapidly in the United States and many other places around the world.

Study circles are voluntary and highly participatory. They help participants confront challenging issues and make difficult choices. Study circles engage citizens in public concerns, bringing the wisdom of ordinary people to bear on difficult issues and helping participants make a real difference on those issues. The cooperative and participatory nature of the process enables the group to capitalize on the experience of all its members.

The study circle is small-group democracy in action. All viewpoints are taken seriously, and each member has an equal opportunity to participate. The process — democratic discussion among equals — is as important as the content.

Roles

The study circle leader (or facilitator) is vital to the group's success. The leader makes sure the discussion is lively but focused. He or she models respectful listening and encourages participants to share their knowledge, experiences, and opinions, while maintaining neutrality. The facilitator also helps the group develop its own guidelines for behavior, addressing such issues as civility and conflict. Sometimes the facilitation is shared by two people who work as a team.

The study circle organizer selects the reading material, recruits participants, arranges the logistics for the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader. (Sometimes the organizer also plays the role of leader.)

Participants, whose commitment and interest are essential for a study circle's success, ultimately "own" the study circle. Their clear understanding of both their role and the leader's role helps create a democratic and collaborative environment.

Goals

Study circles can deepen the participants' understanding of an issue by focusing on the values that underlie opinions. One of the most important questions a study circle leader can ask is: "What experiences or beliefs might lead decent and caring people to support that point of view?" The group works through difficult issues and grapples with the choices that their community or their organization is facing. Study circles seek "common ground" — that is, areas of general agreement — but consensus or compromise is not necessary.

Study circles differ from typical meetings in that they do not begin with a specific desired outcome. The group works together by *deliberating*. Study circles often lead to social and political action on the issue, both by individual participants and by the group.

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Suitability to a variety of organizations

Churches and synagogues, civic and community groups, businesses, youth organizations, advocacy organizations, schools, and unions — as well as community-wide coalitions that include a variety of organizations — have all used study circles to help their members consider vital issues. Sponsorship of study circles provides opportunities for members to gain knowledge, power, and improved communication skills in an enjoyable and challenging setting.

Variations on the basic format

There are many variations on the basic format for a study circle. Ideally, study circles meet once a week for at least three weeks, in sessions of about two hours each. Other schedules can also work well. For example, some organizations combine study circles with their regular monthly meetings. For those groups that cannot meet regularly, a workshop format can be used at a conference or a retreat, with the entire study circle taking place in one or two days.

In addition to written material, videotapes or audiotapes can be used to spark discussion. To increase participation, some study circles break into sub-groups for at least part of the discussion.

The strength of the study circle is its flexibility. Every group's situation is unique, and study circle organizers are encouraged to adapt the basic format to the needs and goals of their own community or organization.

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Organizing study circles on youth issues

The study circle is a flexible process that you can use in many different kinds of settings. The following scenarios will give you an idea of some of the creative ways that you can organize your study circle program.

Scenario #1

Youth are involved in a summer athletics program at a neighborhood YMCA. While the program is underway, several racially-motivated incidents occur in the same neighborhood involving some of the kids in the program. The program director decides to organize youth study circles on race relations with the young people in the summer program and others from the neighborhood. They schedule the circles to meet at the Y, after the athletic program is over in the afternoon. A few Y staff people and adults from the neighborhood are invited to join. Each study circle is co-facilitated by a young person and an adult. At the end of the study circle program, the groups decide to organize an interracial summer basketball program in the neighborhood.

Scenario #2

A local neighborhood association has been considering what to do about an abandoned lot. The lot is attracting drug dealers and vandals. Young people often hang out there, making noise and bothering the neighbors. Several suggestions have come up in association meetings, but so far there is no agreement. The neighborhood association board decides to organize study circles, primarily made up of young people from the neighborhood, to figure out how to handle the vandalism and make the lot an attractive and useful space for all. Each study circle is co-facilitated by a young person and a board member, with the young person as the lead facilitator. Each group has about a dozen young people, with one or two adult participants. When the study circles are complete, they offer a recommendation to the board to transform the lot into a recreation area. At the next association meeting, committees are organized to carry out this recommendation.

Scenario #3

Some members of the football team at a large high school are involved in a drug-related incident that results in the suspension of a few key players from a play-off game. Other team members and the entire student body are upset by the incident and criticize the school's substance abuse policy. The local newspaper picks up the story and runs several articles about "kids and drugs" that stir up the community. The coaching staff, a few administrators, and some members of the football, soccer, and basketball teams decide to organize several study circles for the students to address substance abuse in their school and what to do about it. To make sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate, the organizers schedule study circles at various times, during school and after school. Students serve as facilitators, and faculty and administrators are encouraged to participate. A few parents also want to join in. When the study circles are complete, they submit written recommendations to the administration. The administration uses them as it creates a new substance abuse policy, which includes a peer review court made up of students.

Scenario #4

Seniors at the city's high schools have a community service requirement to fulfill before they can graduate. Some of them decide to hold study circles in the surrounding neighborhood to explore ways for the senior citizens in a housing complex to be better connected to the school and the community at large. Students and senior citizens co-facilitate the groups which examine the needs and concerns of the residents of the housing complex. Through the study circle process, several new initiatives emerge: high school students are hired to do painting and repairs at the complex, under the supervision of residents who have experience in construction; a mentoring program brings knowledgeable senior citizens into the classroom; a foster grandparent program brings together senior citizens with elementary school children; and culinary arts and home

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economics students begin an apprentice program in the dining facility of the senior citizen complex.

The organizing process

Whether you are organizing a small-scale or a large-scale study circle program, you will need to consider these key questions:

- ***Who will sponsor the study circle(s)?*** Sponsors give visibility and credibility to the program and can help recruit participants. For a single study circle, you won't need a formal sponsor. In a small-scale study circle program, a single organization may sponsor study circles among its members. Large-scale programs that bring together different groups in the community require sponsors who are willing to do the organizing work.
- ***Who will lead the group(s)?*** A young person should be the facilitator of the study circle, either alone or with a partner who could be either another young person or an adult.
- ***Who will train the leaders and provide ongoing support?*** See the box on "Training study circle leaders," on page 25.
- ***How will you recruit participants?*** Methods will vary depending upon the scale of your program. However the invitations are issued, *personal contact is the key to successful recruiting*. Don't go for "the usual suspects" — think of ways to involve people who might not usually get involved.
- ***How many times will the group(s) meet? What issue(s) will you talk about?*** This guide provides core sessions (sessions 1,2, and 4) along with several choices for dealing with specific issues of concern to youth (sessions 3a-3d). Sometimes *organizers* choose the issue the study circles will focus on because they know it's of widespread concern to the community. At other times, organizers ask *group members* to choose the issue. If the issue is not included in this guide, the organizer will have to decide what kinds of discussion materials to find or develop.

Planning a small-scale program

You may simply bring together a small group of friends and neighbors for several evenings of discussion. Or, you may want to organize study circles within an organization you belong to. Churches, synagogues, and mosques can host youth study circles. So can Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, YMCAs and YWCAs, Urban Leagues, and others. A civics class in a high school might hold study circles and invite adults to attend.

Key principles for organizing youth study circles

Study circles on youth issues can be made up entirely of young people, or can include a few adults. In either case, there are a few critical keys to success:

- The study circle program should belong to the young people, and not be overly influenced by the adults' presence or points of view. This can be a challenge since many adults are not used to listening to young people as equals. *Attention to this dynamic is critical.*
- The organizers, facilitators, and participants all need to understand and "own" the basic study circles ground rules: honest sharing, respectful listening, openness to all views. In this way, everyone — young people and adults — will have "a place at the table."
- Meetings should last about 60 to 90 minutes.
- Whenever possible, serve food!

Try to bring together groups that don't ordinarily have a chance to meet:

- "Pairing" with another organization to host study circles is a simple way to bring together young people from different ethnic and language groups, social classes, neighborhoods, or religions.
- Pairing can also be a good way to bring together young people and adults. For example, a youth group could pair with a Kiwanis Club or a senior center. A Girls Club could pair with a League of Women Voters chapter.

Planning a large-scale program

Study circle programs that create opportunities for dialogue across an entire community require a strong

organizing effort. If you want to organize this kind of program, you will need to share the work with other community partners. To ensure broad community involvement, consider these basic steps:

- Bring together a working group of community leaders from various organizations and agencies that deal with youth issues or who have strong youth constituencies. Such a working group could include the mayor's office, the school system, the YMCA or YWCA, the Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, 4-H, and the religious and business communities. Ideal partnerships include organizations that have the staff, resources, and media clout to pull the program together, along with other organizations whose main resources are potential study circle leaders and participants (for example, churches, youth organizations, and neighborhood associations).
- Before expanding the program beyond the working group, solidify its commitment by holding a study circle among this core group of people.
- Recruit potential discussion leaders, both young people and adults. These might be members of co-sponsoring organizations, people who have been trained in mediation or conflict resolution, or members of local leadership development programs.
- Hold a few pilot study circles. Their success will help win support from other community leaders and the community at large.
- Hold a "kickoff" event in which the sponsoring organizations broadcast the call for dialogue to potential study circle participants. This is an ideal way to generate media coverage and greater community visibility. State clearly how and why young people should participate.
- Hold a training session for the discussion leaders. The continuing education department of a nearby university, or the local community education association, may be willing to organize this facet of the program. (More details on training young people as facilitators follow on pages 24-27.)
- Recruit participants from a broad cross section of the community. This is easier, of course, if your working group is representative of the community. In particular, reach out to people who don't normally get involved in community or youth-related activities.
- Set meeting dates within a specific time period so that all of the study circles are going on around the same time.
- Consider developing a simple feedback form for participants to complete in their final study circle sessions. In it, people can report their suggestions for the community. This is also an ideal opportunity for participants to report how they might contribute their own time, talents, and other resources to youth issues or programs. Such a feedback form could help establish a "community youth resource bank."
- Help participants find ways to become actively involved in putting their ideas to work in the community. A concluding event that brings together all the study circles and the sponsoring organizations can be a good way to do this: it can spur the formation of working groups throughout the community, and connect action steps with community institutions and programs.

Study circles in high schools

Since high schools are where young people spend much of their time, they make a natural home for study circles on youth issues. And, since many schools are looking for ways to connect with the broader community, the study circles can involve adults from outside the school.

Following are examples of innovative ways in which study circles have been organized in high schools:

- In **South Portland, Maine**, more than 1000 students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members took part in study circles at South Portland High School. They looked at issues of school climate, academics, and campus life. The study circles were led by student-adult facilitator teams, and took place on four consecutive days. Results from the study circles were recorded, analyzed, and reported back to the entire community. From this first phase, action groups were formed to begin implementing the suggested changes.
- In **Springfield, Ohio,** students from several area schools are participating in study circles on race relations as part of a community-wide program on race relations. The student groups generate action suggestions for school administrators and students, and organizers at each school report on the results of their discussions to the program organizers in City Hall.

In addition to these examples which take place outside the classroom, many high school teachers have discovered

that study circles are an exciting and effective way to get students to discuss current events or issues. By serving as both facilitators and participants, students can help each other take an active, participatory approach to addressing a wide range of political or social issues. Study circles can also be an integral part of a civics or American studies curriculum since they provide a direct experience in democratic process.

"Youth summits" and study circles

Youth summits are being held in cities all over the country. Some are large events that bring together teens from many neighborhoods. Other summits are smaller and more focused on particular groups, such as youth leaders or gang members.

These events could provide "kickoff" opportunities for community-wide study circle programs on youth issues. Summits could also provide a strong concluding event for a study circle program. For example, a summit could bring together participants from many study circles to celebrate, get to know each other, share perspectives on key issues, and plan action steps. Concluding summits would also be good places for the study circles to report back to government officials, youth agency staff, school administrators, teachers, community leaders, and business leaders.

Remember that the Study Circles Resource Center can provide assistance and advice as you plan your program.

Leading study circles on youth issues

The study circle facilitator sets the tone for the group and is critical to the group's success. The leader's job is to facilitate others' dialogue by asking questions, identifying key points, involving everyone — in short, managing the group process. Effective leaders put people at ease and help the group feel a sense of "ownership" of the group and the process.

"Expertise" on the issue being considered is not necessary for study circle leadership. However, it *is* important for the leader to have a general knowledge of the issue at hand and the way it is affecting the community. A thorough familiarity with this guide is helpful as well.

On some issues raised in this guide, your group members may benefit from other readings. If you are discussing controversial issues, it will be helpful to have local information such as articles and editorials from the local newspaper. Another way to provide group members with good information and insight into a key issue is to invite a guest to make a presentation that will serve as a discussion starter.

Preparing and supporting young people as discussion facilitators

It is very important to have young people as facilitators. They are powerful symbols of youth as leaders. They are learning — and modeling for their peers — a collaborative, respectful, and democratic kind of leadership. They are also a reminder that the study circle belongs to the kids.

It's also important to find ways to support and encourage new leaders. Working with a "co-facilitator" as a backup — either another young person or an adult — can provide many advantages:

- There is someone with whom to share responsibility. In alternating sessions, the co-facilitator can take turns being the lead facilitator.
- There is someone with whom to plan the discussions.
- You can share impressions of how it's going and can give each other feedback.
- Experienced leaders can help new leaders develop their skills.
- The two co-leaders may have complementary skills. For example, one might be fairly quiet and an excellent listener, while the other might be good at asking thought-provoking questions.
- The co-leaders can come from different demographic groups. For example, the co-leaders could be a man and a woman, a white person and a person of color, a parent and a student, etc. This provides balance and fairness, and helps the group members know that everyone is important to the discussions.

Creative ways to keep participants involved

- Begin the sessions with "ice breaker" exercises, to help members get to know each other and feel comfortable.
- Ask participants to talk about *why* the issue is important to them or to people they know.
- Mix the discussion with brainstorming, working in pairs or small groups, and other variations on the whole-group discussion.
- Suggest that group members keep a journal on their thoughts and feelings about the issue.
- Encourage participants to read about the issue and to share brief readings with the group. Or, encourage them to watch a related film or TV show and to share their reactions with the group.

Training study circle leaders

Study circle leaders should have training that includes 1) an explanation of the process; 2) the experience of participating in a study circle; and 3) the chance to practice facilitation skills. Trainings should give people plenty of opportunities to lead study circles among themselves. Debriefing after each practice session is another important part of a training.

The most effective study circle programs provide support for the discussion leaders in the form of regular, ongoing contact with an organizer or another leader. Co-facilitators should take the time to review what happened, what went well, and what could have been handled differently.

Consult SCRC's *A Guide to Training Study Circle Leaders* (see page 35). We're also glad to talk with you about your training plan and your ideas for who should do your trainings.

Suggestions for facilitators

The following suggestions will be useful to the new or experienced discussion facilitator:

"Beginning is half," says an old Chinese proverb. Set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the start. Make it clear that no one will be allowed to dominate the discussion and that all views will receive a fair hearing. In the first session, share copies of "Ground rules for useful discussions" (see page 28 of this guide or the inside back cover of the Busy Citizen's Guide) and ask group members to help set ground rules. This helps convey that the study circle belongs to the participants.

Be an active listener. You will need to truly hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively. Listening carefully will set a good example for participants and will alert you to potential conflicts.

Stay neutral. As the leader, you have considerable power with the group. That power should be used only for the purpose of furthering the discussion and not for establishing the correctness of a particular viewpoint. By the end of the discussion, group members should not know your views, but should have a better understanding of others' views and their own.

Ask open-ended questions. Questions such as, "What else haven't we considered?" will encourage discussion rather than short, specific answers. Such questions are especially helpful for drawing out quiet members of the group.

Draw out quiet participants. Don't put them on the spot, but rather watch for subtle opportunities to bring people into the discussion naturally. This will be easier if you use time before and after your study circle to become acquainted with each member of your group.

Allow for pauses and silences. People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help someone build up the courage to make a valuable point. Facilitators who tend to be nervous or impatient may find it helpful to count silently to ten after asking a question.

Don't allow the group to make you the expert or "answer person." You should not play the role of final arbiter. Let the participants decide what they believe. Allow group members to correct each other when a mistake is made.

Let participants respond to one another's comments and questions. Encourage interaction among the group. Participants should be conversing with each other, not with the leader. Questions or comments that are directed to the facilitator can often be deflected to another member of the group. Remember, you should speak less than any other person in the group.

Don't let the group get hung up on unprovable "facts" or assertions. Disagreements about basic facts are common for controversial issues. If there is debate over a fact or figure, ask the group if that fact is relevant to the discussion. In some cases, it is best to leave the disagreement unresolved and move on.

Don't let the aggressive, talkative person or faction dominate. If you allow people to call out or gain control of the floor, they will dominate, you may lose control, and the more polite people will become angry and frustrated. At the first sign of trouble, you can often head off problems by referring to the ground rules the group has established.

Keep the discussions on track. Since important issues are usually related, it is easy for groups to move into other areas. Even though participants need the freedom to explore connections and ideas, try to keep the discussion related to the session's topic.

Use conflict productively and don't allow participants to personalize their disagreements. Rather than ignoring areas of disagreement, explore them. Encourage participants to say what they really think, even if it's unpopular. However, do not tolerate put-downs, name-calling, labeling, or personal attacks. Such behaviors should be forbidden in the group's ground rules.

Synthesize or summarize the discussion occasionally. Consolidate related ideas in order to provide a solid base for the discussion to build upon.

Ask hard questions. Don't allow the discussion to simply confirm old assumptions. Avoid following any "line," and encourage participants to re-examine their assumptions. Call attention to points of view that have not been mentioned or seriously considered, even if you don't agree with them.

Don't worry about achieving consensus. While it's good for the study circle to have a sense of where participants stand, consensus is not necessary or required. A study circle is not a business meeting and there is no need to hammer out agreement. Even in the face of widely divergent views, you can still help participants find areas of common ground.

Close the session by inviting group members to mention new ideas they gained in the discussion. This will help the group review its progress in the meeting and give a sense of closure. Before wrapping up, be sure to thank everyone for their contributions to the discussion.

And finally, have a good time! The issues you will be discussing are serious and important ones — both for the participants and the community. But remember to have fun!

Ground rules for useful discussions

This section offers some brief suggestions for useful discussions about social and political issues.

There are no sure-fire rules, but applying some basic principles will make your study circle more productive, satisfying, and enjoyable. Though many of these ground rules seem common-sensical, we all know that in practice they are not so commonly applied!

- Listen carefully to others. Try to really understand what they are saying and respond to it, especially when their ideas differ from your own. Try to avoid building your own arguments in your head while others are talking.
- Think together about what you want to get out of your conversation.
- Be open to changing your mind; this will help you really listen to others' views.
- When disagreement occurs, keep talking. Explore the disagreement. Search for the common concerns beneath the surface. Above all, be civil.
- Value one another's experiences, and think about how they have contributed to your thinking.
- Help to develop one another's ideas. Listen carefully and ask clarifying questions.
- Don't waste time arguing about points of fact. For the time being, you may need to agree to disagree and then move on. You might want to check out the facts before your next conversation.
- Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the conversation.

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A comparison of dialogue and debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In debate, winning is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude – an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

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In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationships, and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate implies a conclusion.

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492–1764.

Youth programs that work

The youth programs described below have been successful in many different communities, with kids from different backgrounds.

Because the best role models for young people are often older youth, many of the programs listed below are based on a model of peer leadership.

Conflict resolution and peer mediation

Many schools and some community organizations are teaching mediation techniques to young people. In many high schools, mediation now resolves hundreds of conflicts a year. The result is often a dramatic reduction in fights and violence, fewer suspensions, and a reduction of tensions.

The **National Association for Mediation in Education** (NAME) provides information and technical assistance for establishing conflict resolution programs in schools. Conflict resolution programs are found in three basic models: peer mediation, classroom training, and all-school training. For more information on youth programs that work, NAME will provide you with a federal government publication, *Guide to Building Conflict Resolution Programs in Schools, Communities, and Juvenile Justice Settings*. Contact: Judy Filner, National Association for Mediation in Education, 1726 M Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 466-4764.

National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR) advances the field of conflict and dispute resolution through technical assistance, educational programs, publications, demonstration projects, and limited grant making. It promotes multicultural understanding and violence prevention by bringing dispute resolution and cooperative problem-solving tools to youth. NIDR's publication, *FORUM*, Spring 1994, Number 25, is wholly dedicated to the subject of youth violence. Contact: National Institute for Dispute Resolution, 1726 M Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036-4502; (202) 466-4764.

Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) began in 1985 as a project of Educators for Social Responsibility Metropolitan Area and the New York City Board of Education. Today it is one of the largest and most successful conflict resolution programs in the country, serving more than 300 schools. RCCP is summarized in a new book called *Waging Peace in our Schools*, by Linda Lantieri and Janet Patti, published by Beacon Press. Contact: Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; (617) 492-1764. ESR is a national membership organization that promotes children's ethical and social development through conflict resolution, violence prevention, intergroup relations, and character education.

Prevention of substance abuse and other high-risk activities

"Prevention" has become the model of choice for many communities that are trying to reduce dangerous behaviors among teens, such as alcohol and drug abuse, cigarette smoking, violence, and unprotected sex. The goal is to reach young children with information, creating opportunities for them to build self-esteem, teaching them how to resist social pressure, and providing skills so they can deal with their problems more constructively.

Many organizations and school programs are training youth to be peer leaders in substance abuse prevention, smoking cessation, or violence/crime prevention programs. Often youth play a significant role in planning and developing the projects as well as in teaching younger children.

The **National Crime Prevention Council**, in addition to offering a wide array of crime-prevention materials, co-sponsors with the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law, a program called Teens, Crime, and the Community. TCC utilizes the strengths of young people, educating them and providing the opportunity for them to serve their communities through action projects that they design themselves. Contact: National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K Street NW, 2nd Floor, Washington, DC 20036-3817; (202) 466-6272, ext. 152 (Michelle Cotton), or ext. 161 (Beth Helmling).

The **National Network for Youth** does peer education and prevention work on health issues such as alcohol and

drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases. Contact: Twylia Fannin, Information Services Director, National Network for Youth, 1319 F Street NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 783-7949.

Join Together is a network for substance abuse prevention information, including model programs, coalitions, events, and funding opportunities. Contact: Astrid Kozel, Join Together, 441 Stuart Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02116; (617) 437-1500; web-site address <http://www/jointogether.org>.

The federal government has many agencies involved in substance abuse prevention education. The **Center for Substance Abuse Prevention** (CSAP) has a National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. Contact: the Federal Drug, Alcohol and Crime Clearinghouse Network, through which you can reach six federal agencies. The number is (800) 788-2800. Press "1" for CSAP.

Adult mentoring

Mentoring programs match a youth with an adult who can provide support and guidance. The best-known mentoring program is **Big Brothers/Big Sisters**. Usually these programs focus on younger children, but increasingly they include youth of middle-school age. Contact: Your local Big Brother/Big Sister association, or Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, 230 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107; (215) 567-7000.

In Baltimore, Maryland, **RAISE, Inc.** (Raising Ambition and Increasing Self Esteem) operates Project RAISE, a nationally acclaimed model program designed to decrease the dropout rate and improve the life chances of very high-risk inner city public school students. RAISE, Inc. also runs a Mentoring Resource Center which operates as a clearinghouse for information about mentoring models and provides technical assistance, program development, and special support to mentoring programs in Baltimore. Contact: RAISE Inc., 605 North Eutaw Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; (410) 752-5016.

Youth on boards of directors

Some community organizations that serve youth have invited youth to serve on their boards of directors. An organization called **Youth on Board** trains young people to serve on boards. Contact: Youth on Board, 58 Day Street, Somerville, MA 02144; (617) 623-9900.

Community service and internships

Getting young people involved in community projects serves to strengthen community life as well as engage youth in civic activity. In a January 1996 Louis Harris poll, 90% of the youth surveyed said they would "volunteer to do something about crime and violence if they only knew what to do." Whether youth plan something as simple as cleaning up a park, or as ambitious as starting a peer counseling hotline, one key to success is for adults to give them the skills and support they need to accomplish their goals.

Youth service programs have become much more prevalent in recent years, partly because of national funding through the **Americorps** program, run by the U.S. government's Corporation for National Service in Washington, D.C. Americorps is a national service program that allows people to earn education benefits in exchange for one or two years of service in the field of education, public safety, human needs, or the environment. The Americorps information hotline provides a directory of Americorps programs and other information, including application forms. Contact: Corporation for National Service, Americorps information hotline, (800) 942-2677.

Youth councils

A neighborhood, community, city, or organization can develop a youth advisory council to represent youth to government officials. Youth councils provide information and make recommendations to decisionmakers about issues relating to youth. The council meets on a regular basis and responds to formal and informal requests for feedback, and can serve as the link between youth study circles on an important issue and the governing body of a local community. Contact: Patty McMahon, Director, **Mayor's Youth Council**, Boston City Hall, Room 603, Boston, MA 02201; (617) 635-4490.

Youth summits

Youth summits have been used in a number of settings to bring large groups of young people together for a common purpose.

In Redwood City, California, youth and adults came together to talk about preventing violence in the community, and to get youth input about root causes and solutions. Contact: Annette Passalacqua, **Youth and Family Assistance**, 609 Price Avenue, #205, Redwood City, CA 94063; (415) 366-8416.

In Boston, the first annual Mayor's Youth Summit in 1995 drew 1,200 teens from all over the city, and offered Boston's 12- to 18-year-olds a chance to learn about opportunities available to them in the city. Contact: Patty McMahon, Director, Mayor's Youth Council, Boston City Hall, Rm. 603, Boston, MA 02201; (617) 635-4490.

Resources for further discussion and action

Organizations

Activism 2000 Project is a resource center and clearinghouse monitoring young people's involvement with local, state, and federal policymakers. Contact: Activism 2000 Project, PO Box E, Kensington, MD 20895; (301) 929-8808; fax (301) 929-8907; or (800) KID-POWER.

The **Alliance for National Renewal**, launched in 1994 by John Gardner, is a nationwide initiative convened by the National Civic League involving a unique network of over 165 national and local organizations serving as a catalyst for renewal of America's communities. ANR's online service offers a homepage including a directory of partner organizations, newsletter excerpts, and a database of more than 100 community renewal stories, many of which focus on youth activities. Contact: Alliance for National Renewal, web-site address <http://www.ncl.org/anr>.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America is a national movement providing youth development activities to more than 2,050,000 youth aged 6 to 18, with an emphasis on those from disadvantaged circumstances. Some clubs are involved in providing intensive services to gang-involved youth. Four such local programs are: "Make It Happen" in Jacksonville, FL; "Kids at Hope" in Phoenix, AZ; "Gang Intervention Program" in Chicago, IL; and "Project Outreach" in Lawrence, MA. Contact: Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 1230 W. Peachtree Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 815-5700.

The **Center for Youth Development and Policy Research** was established in 1990 at the Academy for Educational Development in response to growing concern about youth problems. It is working locally and nationally with a variety of publications and curricula to shift the public debate from youth problems to youth development. Contact: Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009-1202; (202) 884-8267; fax (202) 884-8404; e-mail <cyd@aed.org>.

The **Children's Defense Fund** is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization that exists to provide a strong and effective voice for the children of America, who cannot vote, lobby, or speak out for themselves. Particular attention is directed to the needs of poor, minority, and disabled children. The goal of the Children's Defense Fund is to educate the nation about the needs of children and encourage preventive investment in children before they get sick, drop out of school, suffer family breakdown, or get into trouble. For information about publications contact: Children's Defense Fund, PO Box 90500, Washington, DC 20090-0500; (202) 662-3652.

Children's Express (CE) is a national, nonprofit, youth development and leadership organization that uses oral journalism to give children a significant voice in the world. CE produces two news services researched, reported, and edited by CE reporters (ages 8-13) and editors (ages 14-18) for audiences of all ages. CE has published five books, including *Voices From the Future: Children Speak Out About Violence in America*. Contact: Children's Express, 1440 New York Avenue NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 737-7377; fax (202) 737-0193; web-site address <http://www.ce.org>.

The **Civic Practices Network** is an online journal that brings together innovators and educators across America to share the tools, stories, and best practices of community empowerment and civic renewal. CPN is a nonpartisan project dedicated to enhancing responsible citizenship in all of our institutions and to shaping public policies that support active roles for citizens in everyday problem-solving. CPN offers several focus areas including youth and education. Contact: Civic Practices Network, web-site address <http://www.cpn.org/>.

Choices for the 21st Century is a multifaceted educational program that seeks to engage the American public in consideration of international issues and strengthen the quality of public life in the United States. Choices publishes curricular materials that promote active consideration of current issues and runs a library-based discussion

series that involves students and adults in deliberation on the nation's changing international role. For a list of current resources and additional information on Choices programs contact: Choices Project, Watson Institute, Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI (401) 863-3155; web-site address <http://www.brown.edu/Research/Choices/>.

The Coalition for America's Children works to educate the public and policy-makers about the problems children face and to keep children's issues a priority in our communities. Using the slogan "Who's for Kids and Who's Just Kidding," they help people who care about kids send a unified message to public leaders and provide tools to use locally to improve the lives of children. Contact: Coalition for America's Children, c/o M.B. Fund, 1634 Eye Street, NW, 12th floor, Washington DC 20006; (202) 638-5770; fax (202) 638-5771; e-mail <platcac@benton.org>.

The Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth works to build the capacity of community foundations to assume new leadership roles to improve conditions for children, youth, and families at the local level. The Coalition connects its members to leading thinkers and exceptional practitioners through a national conference series and a technical assistance grants program. Contact: Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth, 1055 Broadway, Suite 170, Kansas City, MO 64105, (816) 842-4246; fax (816) 842-7907.

Community Partnerships with Youth is a national training and development center for youth, educators, youth professionals, and the clergy. They have developed curricula called *Youth in Governance* and *Youth as Trustees*. Contact: Community Partnerships with Youth, 2000 North Wells Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46808; (219) 442-6493; fax (219) 424-7533.

The National 4-H Council is traditionally known for its youth clubs in which members work on projects ranging from livestock to cooking to crafts while developing leadership skills through running meetings, public speaking, and community service. A newer component of 4-H is Community Youth Development, which is based on the belief that young people, their families, and their communities are capable of working together to shape their reality and address mutual challenges. Contact: National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-4999; (301) 961-2800; fax (301) 961-2894.

The Roundtable Center is a statewide agency dedicated to fostering deliberative democracy in Maine. To do this, it promotes the use of study circles in a wide variety of settings. TRC has extensive experience working with young people in study circles, under the auspices of a grant from the Lilly Endowment. Contact: The Roundtable Center, 89 Spring Street, Portland, ME 04101; (207) 775-6443; fax (207) 772-0120.

Search Institute is a research organization that publishes resources about community-based youth work. They also do training and develop programs such as "Uniting Congregations for Youth Development." They have developed an "asset based" approach toward youth development, with guides that describe how different types of youth organizations can work together on youth programs. They have a free quarterly newsletter and a catalog of their publications. Contact: Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415; (800) 888-7828.

The **Study Circles Resource Center**, in conjunction with this guide, can provide assistance — additional resources, free consulting, networking — to a wide range of institutions working to develop small-group discussion programs. SCRC's free quarterly newsletter, *Focus on Study Circles*, provides ongoing information on resources and model programs. Contact: Study Circles Resource Center, PO Box 203, Pomfret CT 06258; (860) 928-2616; fax (860) 928-3713; e-mail <scrc@neca.com>.

YouthBuild USA is a national program, now in 49 states, where young people with an interest in rebuilding their communities are trained in building construction skills for 9 to 18 months. Included in the program are academics, peer counseling, support groups, and emphasis on leadership development. Contact: YouthBuild USA, 58 Day Street, PO Box 440322, Somerville, MA 02144; (617) 623-9900; fax (617) 623-4331.

Publications designed especially for discussion

From the Study Circles Resource Center

Please note that some of these are issue-specific discussion guides, while others are "how-to" publications for study circle trainers and organizers. Several of these publications are available in Spanish. For price and ordering information, contact the Study Circles Resource Center.

- *Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide*
- *The Study Circle Handbook: A Manual for Study Circle Discussion Leaders, Organizers, and Participants*

- *A Guide to Training Study Circle Leaders*
- *Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Materials*
- *Education: How Can Schools and Communities Work Together to Meet the Challenge?* (1995)
- *Confronting Violence in Our Communities: A Guide for Involving Citizens in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving* (1994)
- *Can't We All Just Get Along? A Manual for Discussion Programs on Racism and Race Relations* (2nd ed., 1994)

Also available from SCRC are the following study circle materials that have been developed by the organizers of community-wide programs:

- *How Do We Create a Community Where All Children Are Valued, Supported, Healthy and Safe?* (1996, developed by the InterReligious Council of Central New York)
- *School Readiness: How Can We Prepare for the Future?* (1996, developed by The Connecticut Commission on Children)

From the National Issues Forums

All of the following are publications of the Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forums. For price and ordering information, contact Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 4050 Westmark Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52004-1840; (800) 228-0810. Abridged versions for new readers are also available.

- *Coping With AIDS: The Public Response to the Epidemic* (1988)
- *Criminal Violence: What Direction Now for the War on Crime?* (1992)
- *The Drug Crisis: Public Strategies for Breaking the Habit* (1989)
- *Kids Who Commit Crimes: What Should Be Done About Juvenile Violence?* (1994)
- *The Troubled American Family: Which Way Out of the Storm?* (1995)

Other publications related to youth issues

The 21st Century is a "journal written by the next generation." This newspaper is a publication of the Young Authors Foundation, Inc. Contact: Editor, Box 30, Newton, MA 02161; (617) 964-6800; fax (617) 332-8844.

The **American News Service** (ANS), a project of the Center for Living Democracy, in Brattleboro, Vermont, is now reaching over 700 news outlets nationwide with stories of innovations in public problem solving, many of which feature youth issues and youth action in community life. Stories come complete with contact numbers in case you would like to learn more about the particular initiatives described. Contact: The American News Service, RR1 Black Fox Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301; (800) 654 NEWS; e-mail <awg@ans.sover.net>; web-site address <http://americannews.com>. Also available from the Center for Living Democracy is the **Learning Tools Catalog**, an extensive resource list including a section on "Youth in Action." Contact: Center for Living Democracy (see address above); (802) 254-1234; fax (802) 254-1227.

"Building a Better Future for Young People," by Joe Berney, tells the story of Eugene/Springfield and Lane County, Oregon, where civic leaders initiated a community-wide mentoring program, Networking for Youth. It appears in *Civic Partners*, a publication of the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, Spring 1996. Contact: Joe Berney, President, Networking for Youth, 99 West 10th Avenue, Suite 340, Eugene, OR 97401; (541) 302-6665; e-mail <HN4488@handsnet.org>.

The **Citizens Committee for New York City** has produced a large number of brief and highly useful guides, such as: *Empowering Youth: The Key to Successful Youth Service Projects; High-Risk Youth — Destroying the Myths; Starting a Homework Help Program; Starting a Volunteer Visitor Project*, and others. These guides are brief and hands-on. Contact: Citizens Committee for New York City, 305 Seventh Avenue, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10001; (212) 989-0909.

Free Spirit Publishing offers SELF-HELP FOR KIDS, a catalog of resources for youth and youth workers. Examples include two books by Barbara A. Lewis: *Kid's Guide to Service Projects*, which details over 500 service ideas for young people, and *Kid's Guide to Social Action*, which includes real stories about real kids who are making a difference at home and around the world. Contact: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc., 400 First Avenue North, Suite 616, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1730; (800) 735-7323.

Helping Teens Stop Violence: A Practical Guide for Counselors, Educators, and Parents, by Allan Creighton and Paul Kivel, provides excellent background information, theory, program design, and hands-on curricula including exercises, role plays, ice breakers, facilitation tips, and

other details for working with groups of teens. Available at bookstores or from the publisher. Contact: Hunter House Inc., PO Box 2914, Alameda, CA 94501; (800) 266-5592.

"Investing in Youth in Urban America," by Angela Glover Blackwell, offers powerful arguments for the vital role that young people must have in solving public problems. First given as a speech to the National Civic League, it appears in the Fall-Winter 1994 issue of the *National Civic Review*. Contact: National Civic League, 1445 Market Street, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80202-1728; (303) 571-4343; fax (303) 571-4404.

Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being, is published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the U.S. The mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. This is an excellent source of comprehensive data on American children. Contact: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Attn: KIDS COUNT Data Book, 701 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21202; (410) 223-2890.

The Mentoring Resource Center at RAISE, Inc. distributes publications such as *The Two of Us: A Handbook for Mentors*; *Mentoring Manual: A Guide to Program Development and Implementation*; and *Partnership Mentoring Manual*, developed in collaboration with the Baltimore City Public Schools. Contact: RAISE Inc., 605 North Eutaw Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; (410) 752-5016.

The **National League of Cities** has a Children and Families in Cities program with publications about youth programs. *Youth Participation and Community Building*, for instance, is a 20-page guide with examples of 15 programs. Contact: National League of Cities, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 550, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 626-3000.

New Designs for Youth Development magazine is a quarterly publication "dedicated to voicing progressive, humane, and caring approaches to the development of youth and community." Contact: National Network for Youth, 1319 F Street NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20004.

Teen Voices is a quarterly magazine by, for, and about teenage and young adult women. Available at newsstands for $3, or by subscription. Contact: Teen Voices, 316 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115; (617) 262-2434.

Teaching Tolerance is published twice a year by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which founded Teaching Tolerance in 1991 to provide teachers with resources and ideas to help promote harmony in the classroom. The Spring 1997 issue features a high school study circle program on race relations in Springfield, Ohio. Contact: Teaching Tolerance, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104; fax (334) 264-3121.

Who Cares: A Journal of Service and Action covers the cutting edge of community service and social action across the U.S. Launched in the Fall of 1993, *Who Cares* aims to educate, challenge, and inspire people working for positive solutions to our nation's most pressing problems. Published by Who Cares, Inc., an independent nonprofit, its mission is to serve as the communication forum for a new generation of leaders in the nonprofit sector. *Youth Voices* reports findings from a research project recently completed by Who Cares and the Center for Policy Alternatives, and provides a comprehensive look at how today's young people describe their concerns and outlooks on politics and civic life. For more information on the journal, or for a copy of *Youth Voices*, contact Heather McLeod, editor of *Who Cares*, at (202) 628-1691.

Wisconsin Clearinghouse offers a comprehensive catalogue on prevention and education materials for schools, families, and communities. Contact: University Health Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dept. 6C, PO Box 1468, Madison, WI 53701-1468; (800) 322-1468.

Youth Leadership In Action: A High School Focus (YLIA:HS) curriculum. This curriculum is a comprehensive, academic, community youth leadership course that prepares high school students to be effective community leaders through experiential learning and community service projects. Contact: Fanning Leadership Center, Attn: YLIA: High School Focus, Hoke Smith Annex, Athens, GA 30602-4350; (706) 542-1108; fax (706) 542-7007.

Youth Today, published bi-monthly, calls itself "The Newspaper on Youth Work." Youth Today is available free to youth policymakers and youth workers. Contact: *Youth Today*, 1200 17th Street NW, 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 785-0764.

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Chris Cato, Youth Worker, Boston, MA

Cynthia Chalker, Curator of Exhibitions, The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia, PA

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